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**NINETEEN GET NATIONAL AWARDS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS
TO LIFE-SAVING NOAA WEATHER RADIO**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) today presented the 2003 *NOAA Weather and All Hazards Radio Mark Trail Awards* to individuals and groups that made contributions to expand and improve the life-saving NOAA Weather Radio system coverage, awareness and radio receiver ownership across the nation. The awards, were given today at a luncheon held on Capitol Hill. NOAA is part of the Department of Commerce.

"NOAA Weather Radio is a lifesaver when severe weather and other hazards threaten," said Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr. USN (ret.), NOAA's administrator. "When a tornado, or other disaster, threatens in the middle of the night, only NOAA Weather Radio with its alarm feature can alert you. Every house needs a NOAA Weather Radio, and together with this year's Mark Trail Award winners we are making that possible one person at a time."

NOAA Weather Radio continuously broadcasts weather forecasts and warnings, as well as other hazard warnings. It is credited with saving lives during severe weather conditions. The award is named after syndicated comic strip character, Mark Trail, the official spokesman for NOAA Weather Radio.

Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Jack Kelly, director of the National Weather Service said, "Our Mark Trail Award winners are making a difference in communities across the nation. Thanks to their efforts NOAA Weather Radio transmitters are popping up at a breathtaking pace, with over 800 transmitters nationwide we can now provide broadcasts to 95 percent of the American population."

Now in its seventh year, the Mark Trail Awards are presented to individuals, local governments, organizations and corporations, recognizing either their support to expand NOAA Weather Radio coverage, receiver ownership or quick reactions that saved lives during severe weather episodes, or civil emergencies.

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Mark Trail, a syndicated comic strip published through King Features in approximately 175 newspapers nationwide, has been the official spokesman for NOAA Weather Radio since 1997. Jack Elrod, writer and illustrator for Mark Trail, became involved with NOAA Weather Radio in 1995, featuring it in a Sunday comic strip.

Kelly noted the National Weather Service (NWS) also broadcasts other emergency messages over NOAA Weather Radio. "Time is just as critical during a technological disaster as it is in weather emergencies. NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts civil emergency messages from emergency management officials across the country and is a critical link during a disaster. We hope to spread the word that these radios can save your life in a variety of emergencies."

The 2003 Mark Trail Award winners are:

- Kansas City Metropolitan Emergency Manager's Committee (MEMC) and Price Chopper grocery stores. Through a unique partnership the team expanded the number of NOAA Weather Radio listeners in the Metro Kansas City area by placing 100,000 new receivers in homes and businesses in a three year period.
- Calcasieu Parish Office of Emergency Preparedness working with the Lake Charles Weather Forecast Office in Louisiana developed and coordinated a means of quickly disseminating critical emergency information to the public and media in the case of a hazardous release of toxic gases or other life threatening events.
- Dow Corning purchased 140 NOAA Weather Radio receivers for schools, day care centers, nursing homes, hospitals, churches, fire departments, and government buildings in Carroll County, Kentucky and Switzerland County, Indiana. Dow Corning worked closely with the County and State Emergency Managers in both Kentucky and Indiana to make the program a success.
- Marshall County Emergency Management and Iowa Area 6 Regional Planning Commission working with the State of Iowa Emergency Management and Federal Emergency Management Agency placed NOAA Weather Radios in all 16,000 households and critical facilities within Marshall County.
- Iowa Area 15 Regional Planning Commission working with the State of Iowa Emergency Management Division and the Federal Emergency Management Agency made NOAA Weather Radio receivers available to the 24,000 residents of Appanoose, Davis, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lucas, Mahaska, Monroe, Van Buren, Wapello and Wayne Counties for \$11 per receiver.
- Steve Sanders of Crosett, Ark., led the effort to install a NOAA Weather Radio transmitter to his area. Over a period of three years, Sanders brought together the U.S. Geological Survey, city and county government, local industries and civic organizations to fund the transmitter at Fountain Hill, which was dedicated in August 2002.

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- Ray Resendez is responsible for placing NOAA Weather Radio receivers in almost every school and day care center in El Paso County, Texas. Resendez is also working to see that a NOAA Weather Radio is installed and working in every area business and has secured grants and funding from a number of sources. At the present time, he is helping the NWS to prepare broadcasts over a Spanish-language transmitter.
- Gilbert Sebenste, Staff Meteorologist, Northern Illinois University, has worked to program and install over 150 NOAA Weather Radios in all the buildings at the NIU main and satellite campuses. Sebenste is working with the NWS to install a new transmitter in DeKalb and helped secured a climate controlled space, tower space, power and emergency back-up power at no cost to NOAA.
- The U.S. Coast Guard in Alaska has partnered with the NWS in creating and operating 16 low power "high" sites with four more being added in FY 2003. The USCG partnership is exclusive to Alaska and increases NOAA Weather Radio coverage by 300 percent in that region. USCG purchased, installed and maintains all sites.
- Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., based in Johnston, Iowa, has worked closely with the NWS in rural America. Pioneer is using their Web site to sell NOAA Weather Radios at cost and their Growing Point magazine with a circulation of 180,000 provides valuable information on NOAA Weather Radio's All-Hazards benefits.
- Thomson, manufacturer of RCA televisions, is recognized for incorporating NOAA All Hazards receivers in seven new flat screen TV models being introduced to the marketplace in July 2003. Thomson sells about 20 percent of the TVs purchased in the United States.
- Smithsonian Institute is recognized for making NOAA Weather Radio a feature in their Catastrophic Events course. This middle school course teaches the importance of NOAA Weather Radio and reaches over 70,000 students each school year.
- The State of Maryland is recognized for placing NOAA All Hazards radio receivers in all Maryland schools.
- Washington State Division of Emergency Management (WSDem) has been instrumental in installing or upgrading of three transmitters in eastern Washington. All the projects have resulted in expanded or significantly improved NWR coverage with substantial monetary savings to the NWS. In addition, WSDem has designed, acquired and installed the hazards warning system at a military as well as, nuclear site, which integrates their warning system into several NWR regional transmitters.
- Ken Fagnant & Dennis Godfrey, through their joint efforts, have obtained a new transmitter that expands NWR coverage in southeastern Idaho. In addition, their efforts have resulted in placing NWR receivers in schools, school administrative facilities, city and county offices, hospitals, libraries, elder care facilities, and road and bridge facilities.

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- Steve Johnson of Steve Johnson and Associates, Fresno, Calif., is recognized for his donation of more than 100 programmable NOAA Weather Radio receivers to area Office of Emergency Services, and primary and secondary health care facilities. Johnson's personal generosity is a major step in keeping the county health facilities informed of potential severe weather.
- Medina Electric Cooperative using Department of Agriculture Rural Utility Service grant money, installed four new NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards transmitters in parts of south Texas. The combined effort included working with city and county leaders in a 17-county service area to raise matching funds and donations as well as a media campaign to develop NOAA Weather Radio awareness.
- Van Wert County Emergency Management Agency through their efforts on November 10, 2002, when an F-4 tornado cut a path one half mile wide through the city and county of Van Wert, Ohio. Van Wert County Emergency Manager Rick McCoy activated the county's emergency preparedness plan and triggered an alarm at the theater based on a NOAA Weather Radio tornado warning. The theater manager followed the instructions and led 50 children and their parents to shelter before the theater was demolished. There were no fatalities.
- Norman Parent helped expand NOAA Weather Radio transmitter coverage into eastern Montana. As a volunteer, Norm Parent was crucial in getting commitments from four sets of county commissioners, the Mid Rivers Telephone Cooperative, an electric cooperative, four county emergency managers and two NOAA National Weather Service offices.

NOAA's National Weather Service is the primary source of weather data, forecasts and warnings for the United States and its territories. The National Weather Service operates the most advanced weather and flood warning and forecast system in the world, helping to protect lives and property and enhance the national economy. To learn more about the National Weather Service, visit: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov>.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of the Nation's coastal and marine resources. NOAA is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce. To learn more about NOAA, visit: <http://www.noaa.gov>.

Learn more about NOAA Weather Radio at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/>

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